



Biden pushes for U.S. voting rights law as restrictions mount

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden used the 100th anniversary of Tulsa's race massacre to make a plea for sweeping legislation in Congress to protect the right to vote as Republican-led governments in Texas and other states pass new restrictions making it tougher to cast ballots. Biden, marking the centennial in Oklahoma on Tuesday, called out lawmakers in Congress — including two senators in his own party — for holding up action on voting bills. Invoking the words of the late Rep. John Lewis, Biden said the right to vote is "precious" and must be protected. He pledged that June will be a "month of action" on Capitol Hill as Congress considers the legislation, which is

among the top priorities of his administration.

"We're not giving up," Biden said. "I'm going to fight like heck with every tool at my disposal for its passage." Republican state legislators are pushing what experts say is an unprecedented number of bills aimed at restricting access to the ballot box. While Republicans say the goal is to prevent voter fraud, Democrats contend that the measures are aimed at undermining minority voting rights. Most recently, the Texas Legislature moved closer to passing a bill that would reduce early voting hours, tighten voter identification requirements for absentee ballots and eliminate ballot drop boxes and drive-thru voting centers.

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President Joe Biden speaks as he commemorates the 100th anniversary of the Tulsa race massacre, at the Greenwood Cultural Center, Tuesday, June 1, 2021, in Tulsa, Okla.

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Continued from Front

The bill was blocked only when Texas Democrats walked off the House floor on Sunday night; Republican Gov. Greg Abbott has said he will order a special session to ultimately ensure its passage.

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell played down the ability of the new state laws to quash voter turnout.

"I don't think any of these efforts at the state level are designed to suppress the vote based upon race," McConnell said at a news conference Wednesday in Kentucky.

McConnell promised to block the federal voting rights bill, characterizing it as undue government overreach into state election systems. He said no GOP senators support it.

Biden addressed the federal voting rights legislation during an event marking the 100th anniversary of the Tulsa race massacre, in which a white mob looted and burned Tulsa's Greenwood district, which was known as Black Wall Street. Despite Biden's pledge to keep fighting to pass legislation protecting voting rights, he acknowledged that his biggest obstacle may be within his own party.

Biden called out two fellow Democrats in explain-



Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., left, pauses to speak with Sen. Richard Burr, R-N.C., as they leave a Republican luncheon for votes ahead of the approaching Memorial Day recess, at the Capitol in Washington, Wednesday, May 26, 2021.

Associated Press

ing why he hasn't enacted some of the most ambitious elements of his agenda, noting that slim majorities in the House and evenly divided Senate have hamstrung legislative negotiations around key issues like voting rights.

Responding to critics who question why he hasn't been able to get a wide-reaching voting rights bill passed, Biden lamented, "Well, because Biden only has a majority of effectively four votes in the House, and a tie in the Senate — with two members of the Sen-

ate who voted more with my Republican friends."

It appeared to be a reference to Democratic Sens. Joe Manchin of West Virginia and Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona, both of whom have frustrated Democrats with their defense of the filibuster. The rule requires most legislation to win 60 votes to pass, making many of Democrats' biggest priorities like voting rights and gun control dead on arrival in the 50-50 Senate. While Sinema is a sponsor of the voting rights bill that passed the House, Manchin has re-

fused to sign on, calling the measure "too broad."

White House press secretary Jen Psaki on Wednesday denied that Biden was blaming Manchin and Sinema for holding up the legislation. She said Biden does not see "eye to eye on every single detail of every issue" with every lawmaker, but that he simply was referencing the commentary he often hears on cable TV about the slow progress on legislation he wants to sign into law.

"I don't think he was intending to convey anything oth-

er than a little bit of commentary on TV punditry," Psaki told reporters after being pressed to explain what Biden meant.

But it's not just Manchin and Sinema who oppose doing away with the filibuster. As many as 10 Democratic senators are reluctant to change the rules even for must-pass legislation such as the voting rights bill. Biden has not said he wants to end the filibuster.

It's unclear whether Biden's comments will change the views of any senators, who are facing tough choices ahead as pressure mounts on them.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., told colleagues that he would be bringing the voting rights bill to a vote the week of June 21, in effect testing where senators stand. Schumer warned in a letter to colleagues last week to brace for the month ahead.

Biden has tasked Vice President Kamala Harris with leading the administration's efforts to defend voting rights. It adds another high-profile fight to Harris' fast-expanding portfolio, which includes addressing the root causes of migration from Central America, leading the National Space Council and working on expanding access to broadband internet. □

Black students in Washington upset by school project

SPOKANE, Wash. (AP) — A family in Spokane, Washington, is demanding that a school administrator be removed after he suggested he could segregate two Black middle school students who were directed to clean freshly picked cotton as part of a classroom assignment, according to lawyers for the family.

Taylor Skidmore, assistant principal at Sacajawea Middle School, offered to

remove the 14-year-old twins from their social studies class when their mother called to raise concerns about the cotton lesson, according to a statement Wednesday from ACLU of Washington and Team-Child, a legal firm.

Mother Brandi Feazell said she was shocked at Skidmore's suggestion to segregate her daughters from their class.

"As two of the only three

Black students in the class that day, my daughters already felt singled out during an activity that required them to clean cotton," Brandi Feazell said. "Separating them from the rest of the class would only compound their pain and isolation and do nothing to change the racist culture and policies that led to this inappropriate and harmful lesson in the first place."

Spokane Public Schools is-

sued a statement saying the students were learning about the industrial revolution and the cotton gin, and the incident is being investigated. "We take all complaints very seriously and are committed to investigating them fully," the district said. "There are conflicting reports regarding this incident."

"Once the third-party investigation is completed, we look forward to coming back to share the outcomes," the district said. On May 3, the twins said their fifth-period social studies teacher took out a box of raw cotton and told the class they were going to see who could clean cotton the fastest.

"The teacher kept say-

ing, 'We don't need slaves anymore,' " one of the girls said. "That really hurt because it felt like she was saying there was a time when slavery was OK."

The twins have been out of school since the cotton lesson and do not feel comfortable going back until the incident is addressed, their mother said.

In addition to asking that Skidmore be removed, the family wants the social studies teacher and other school administrators who failed to act promptly to face discipline.

They are also asking for a public apology from Spokane Public Schools and for anti-racism training to be implemented districtwide. □



Harvard researchers recommend Census not use privacy tool

By MIKE SCHNEIDER
Associated Press

A group of Harvard researchers has come out against the U.S. Census Bureau's use of a controversial method to protect privacy with the numbers used for redrawing congressional and legislative districts, saying it doesn't produce data good enough for redistricting.

The Harvard researchers said in a paper released last week that using the new privacy method will make it impossible for states to comply with the requirement that districts have equal populations, a principle also known as "One Person, One Vote." The technique also doesn't universally protect the privacy of people who participated in the 2020 census, they said.

The privacy method adds "noise," or intentional errors, to the data to obscure the identity of any given participant in the 2020 census while still providing statistically valid information. Rather than use this technique, known as "differential privacy," the research-

ers said the Census Bureau should rely on a privacy method used in the 2010 census, when data in some households were swapped with other households.

"Over the past half century, the Supreme Court has firmly established the principle of One Person, One Vote, requiring states to minimize the population difference across districts based on the Census data," they wrote. Differential privacy makes it "impossible to follow this basic principle."

The technique "negatively impacts the redistricting process and voting rights of minority groups without providing clear benefits," the researchers said.

The Harvard researchers made the recommendation as the Census Bureau puts the final touches on how it will use differential privacy. Simultaneously, a panel of federal judges in Alabama is deliberating whether the method can be used on the redistricting data expected to be released in mid-August. Alabama's legal challenge argues differential privacy will produce inaccurate data,



This April 5, 2020, photo shows an envelope containing a 2020 census letter mailed to a U.S. resident in Detroit.

Associated Press

and the judges could rule any day.

The Census Bureau says more privacy protections are needed as technological innovations magnify the threat of people being identified through their census answers, which are confidential by law. Computing power is now so vast that it can easily crunch third-party data sets that combine personal information from credit ratings and social media companies, purchasing records, voting patterns and public documents, among other things. "With today's powerful

computers and cloud-ready software, bad actors can easily find and download data from multiple databases. They can use sophisticated computer programs to match information between those databases and identify the people behind the statistics we publish.

And they can do it at lightning speed," two Census Bureau officials, John Abowd and Victoria Velkoff, wrote in a blog post several weeks ago.

The Harvard team — including political scientists, statisticians and a data sci-

entist — simulated drawing a large number of realistic maps of political districts in different states. They used data from the 2010 census, applied the most recent Census Bureau version of the privacy technique, and followed rules that the political districts needed to have equal population and be compact and contiguous.

According to the researchers, differential privacy made it more difficult to draw districts of equal population, particularly for smaller districts such as state legislative seats.

It undercounted racially mixed areas, as well as politically mixed areas where both Democrats and Republicans lived, while overestimating racially and politically segregated areas, making it more unpredictable whether a minority voter would be included in a district where more than half of registered voters are either Black or Hispanic. That would either hamper or artificially inflate the voting power of minority groups, the researchers said. □

Jill Biden getting Delaware beach day for her 70th birthday

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE
WASHINGTON (AP) —

Jill Biden is getting a day at the beach for her 70th birthday.

President Joe Biden and his wife were heading to their Delaware beach house Wednesday evening to help the first lady celebrate that personal milestone on Thursday.

The trip makes for a rare midweek getaway from the White House by a president. It will also be the president's first visit to the couple's Rehoboth Beach home since he took office in January.

The Bidens were expected to be back at the White House on Friday.

Jill Biden, a longtime community college English professor, recently finished virtually teaching a course for Northern Virginia Community College. She also

won't be teaching over the summer.

Biden often speaks about how proud he is of his wife of nearly 44 years.

"Teaching is not what Jill does. Teaching is who she is," Biden said last week, echoing his wife's own description of herself. "And she's done it her, her whole adult life, and she's still doing it."

Biden said his wife had pledged she would continue to teach as first lady.

"But I don't think she bargained for having to teach online initially," he joked, adding that she spent a lot of time, "four hours a day for about a month," learning how to teach virtually as most schooling was done that way during the pandemic.

Biden bought the beach house for \$2.7 million in 2017, after leaving the vice

presidency and aided by a \$8 million multibook deal that he and his wife signed. The house is on a cul-de-sac in North Shores, just north of the resort town of Rehoboth Beach. It has a swimming pool that overlooks Cape Henlopen State Park, is blocks from the Atlantic Ocean and a short drive from downtown Rehoboth Beach.

The Bidens moved in less than two years after their son Beau, a former Delaware attorney general and Delaware Army National Guard member, died of brain cancer in May 2015. One sign on the house says "Beau's gift;" another sign reads "Forever Jill."

Jill Biden told Vogue magazine that her husband had promised her that "when I write my book, I'll buy you a beach house."

"I wanted it to be the kind



In this May 27, 2021 file photo, first lady Jill Biden talks with media after touring the vaccine clinic at Metropolitan Community College, in Kansas City, Mo.

Associated Press

of place where you can come in in your wet bathing suit and bare feet and I can just take the broom and brush out the sand," she told Vogue for the March 2020 article. "And that's what this is. Everything's easy."

Joe Biden spent time in

Rehoboth Beach during the 2020 presidential campaign, including after the Democratic National Convention and after becoming president-elect.

Biden so far has spent most weekends as president at his home in Wilmington, Delaware. □

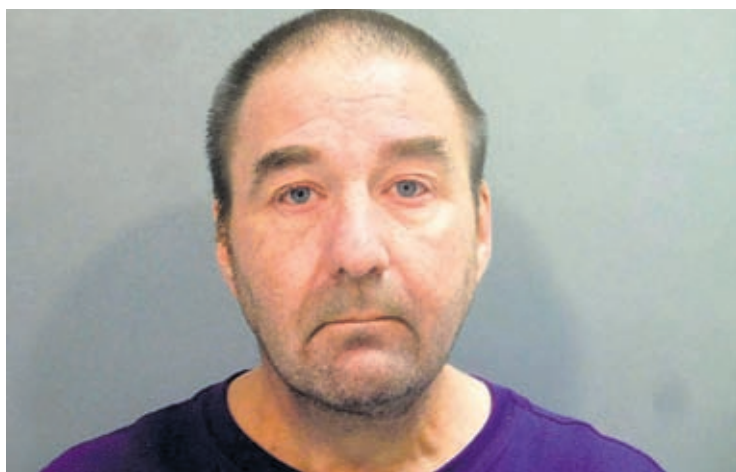
Report: Oversight lapses at impaired pathologist's hospital

By **ANDREW DeMILLO**

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP) — An Arkansas veterans hospital missed the errors made by a pathologist who pleaded guilty to involuntary manslaughter while working impaired due to its poor oversight, according to an inspector general's report released Wednesday.

The report by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs inspector general criticized the Veterans Health Care System of the Ozarks, where Robert Morris Levy worked, for not having a "culture of accountability" that would have encouraged others to report his mistakes without fear of reprisals.

Under an agreement with federal prosecutors, Levy pleaded guilty last year to one count of voluntary manslaughter in the death of a patient he misdiagnosed. The IG's report said lapses in the Fayetteville facility's quality management



In this Aug. 17, 2019, file photo provided by the Washington County, Arkansas Sheriff's Department, Robert Levy is pictured in a booking photo.

Associated Press

processes contributed to thousands of Levy's errors. "Any one of these breakdowns could cause harmful results," the report said. "Occurring together and over an extended period of time, the consequences were devastating, tragic, and deadly."

Levy pleaded guilty to misdiagnosing a patient with small cell carcinoma who

died after being treated for a type of cancer he didn't have. Levy falsified the patient's medical record to state that a second pathologist agreed with his diagnosis, according to the agreement.

Levy also pleaded guilty to one count of mail fraud for receiving 2-methyl-2-butanol, a chemical that he used to intoxicate himself

but that standard drug and alcohol screenings don't test for.

Levy was originally indicted on three counts of involuntary manslaughter in the deaths of patients prosecutors said he misdiagnosed. He was also indicted on multiple charges of fraud and making false statements for his alleged attempts to conceal his substance abuse and incorrect diagnoses.

Levy was fired from the Veterans Health Care System of the Ozarks in Fayetteville in April 2018. The hospital did not have an immediate comment on the report.

VA officials said in 2019 that outside pathologists reviewed nearly 34,000 cases handled by Levy and found more than 3,000 errors or missed diagnoses dating back to 2005. The inspector general's report said 589 of those were "major diagnostic discrepancies."

U.S. Rep. Steve Womack,

whose district includes Fayetteville, said the report showed multiple failures that allowed Levy's misconduct.

"The report details an abject failure of leadership that led to the misdiagnosis and subsequent harm to hundreds of veterans who rely on the VA health system for care," Womack said in a statement. "It is unacceptable to limit accountability to the criminal conduct of Dr. Levy."

The inspector general's recommendations include exploring whether to have a mandatory alcohol testing policy for employees, including healthcare workers who perform functions that would put patients at risk if they're impaired.

The report also called for the hospital to review its "psychological safety climate" to ensure patients, staff and the public feel they can report unsafe care without fear of reprisals. □

National Enquirer owner fined for illegal Trump campaign aid



In this Jan. 31, 2014, photo, David Pecker, chairman and CEO of American Media, speaks at the Shape & Men's Fitness Super Bowl Party in New York.

Associated Press

By **TALI ARBEL AP Technology Writer**

A federal election watchdog fined the publisher of the National Enquirer \$187,500 for squelching the story of a former Playboy model who claimed she'd had an affair with former President Donald Trump.

The Federal Election Commission fined A360 Media,

formerly known as American Media, for paying Karen McDougal \$150,000 in August 2016, saying the payment was made to keep her story from becoming public before the presidential election.

The FEC said the publisher's "payment to Karen McDougal to purchase a limited life story right combined

with its decision not to publish the story, in consultation with an agent of Donald J. Trump and for the purpose of influencing the election, constituted a prohibited corporate in-kind contribution."

Campaign finance laws prohibit corporations from cooperating with a campaign to affect an election. The publisher didn't immediately return a message left via its website. An emailed statement from a representative for David Pecker, who stepped down as CEO of the publisher in 2020, said that Pecker was not a party to the settlement and had not paid a fine.

Federal prosecutors in Manhattan agreed in 2018 not to prosecute American Media in exchange for its cooperation in a campaign finance investigation. That probe led to a three-year prison term for Trump's former personal lawyer, Michael Cohen, who had urged the publisher to obtain the rights to McDougal's story and promised to reimburse them for the

payment.

Cohen served about a year of his sentence before he was released to home confinement as the coronavirus spread through prisons. Since then, he has spoken out frequently against Trump, and tweeted on Wednesday that he was willing to cooperate with federal prosecutors on any other prosecution of Trump or his associates.

The National Enquirer for years buried stories about Trump and some other celebrities with a "catch-and-kill" strategy of buying the rights to these stories and then not publishing them.

Common Cause, a public interest group which filed the complaint with the FEC in 2018, said in a statement that the fine was a "win for democracy" but said the agency's "failure to hold former-President Trump and his campaign accountable for this violation lays bare the dysfunction at the FEC." In its 2018 complaint, it also asked the agency to investigate Trump and his campaign. In a letter to Com-

mon Cause Tuesday, the agency said there was "an insufficient number of votes to find reason to believe that the remaining respondents violated the Federal Election Campaign Act."

Common Cause also noted that the FEC's Republican commissioners had blocked enforcement against Trump for a payment to Stormy Daniels in a decision released last month. The FEC has three Republicans, two Democrats and an Independent commissioner.

Common Cause said that the FEC "has again shown itself incapable of fully enforcing the campaign finance laws passed by Congress." The National Enquirer and A360 Media are owned by hedge fund Chatham Asset Management. A Chatham representative did not immediately reply to a request for comment. A 2019 deal that would have sold the Enquirer to the former head of the airport newsstand company Hudson News was not completed. □

Herzog, scion of prominent Israeli family, elected president

By ILAN BEN ZION

Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Isaac Herzog, a veteran politician and the scion of a prominent Israeli family, was elected president Tuesday, a largely ceremonial role that is meant to serve as the nation's moral compass and promote unity. Herzog is set to become Israel's 11th president after securing 87 votes in a secret ballot among the 120 members of the Knesset, or parliament. He will succeed Reuven Rivlin, who leaves office next month at the end of a seven-year term.

"I intend to be the president of everyone," Herzog said after the votes were tallied. "We must defend Israel's international status and its good reputation in the family of nations, fight antisemitism and hatred of Israel, and preserve the pillars of our democracy." Herzog, 60, is a former head of Israel's Labor Party and opposition leader who unsuccessfully ran against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in the 2015 parliamentary elections. He comes from a prominent Zionist family. His father, Chaim Herzog, was Israel's ambassador to the United Nations before be-



In this Monday, March 27, 2017, file photo, Isaac Herzog speaks at the AIPAC Policy Conference in Washington.

Associated Press

ing elected president. His uncle, Abba Eban, was Israel's first foreign minister and ambassador to the United Nations and United States. His grandfather was the country's first chief rabbi. Herzog defeated Miriam Peretz, 67, an educator who was seen as a down-to-earth outsider close to the country's dominant conservative and national-

ist political camp. Herzog has served as head of the Jewish Agency, a nonprofit that works closely with the government to promote immigration to Israel, for the past three years since resigning from parliament. He was widely seen as the favorite because of his deep ties to the political establishment. He will hold office for a single seven-year

term starting July 9. The president is tasked with tapping a political party leader to form governing coalitions after parliamentary elections. Israel has held four national elections in the past two years amid a protracted political crisis. Netanyahu's opponents faced a midnight deadline Wednesday to put together a new coalition government. If they fail, the

country could be plunged into another election campaign.

The president also has the power to grant pardons — creating a potentially sensitive situation as Netanyahu stands trial for a series of corruption charges.

"The title of 'first citizen' and the task of guarding the character of the state of Israel, particularly at this point in time, are heavy responsibilities," Rivlin said in a statement congratulating his successor. "I have no doubt that you will bear them superbly."

Peretz immigrated from Morocco as a child and has worked as a teacher, educator and lecturer on Judaism, Zionism and grief. Two of her sons died serving in the Israeli military. In 2018 she was awarded the Israel Prize, the country's top award, for lifetime achievement.

She would have been the first woman and the first settler to hold the office.

She and her family lived in one of Israel's settlements in the Sinai Peninsula until a peace treaty was struck with Egypt in 1979 and the territory was returned. Peretz then moved to the settlement of Givat Ze'ev, in the occupied West Bank just north of Jerusalem. □

Russian upper house votes to exit from overflight treaty

By VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV

Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — The Russian parliament's upper house voted Wednesday to withdraw from an international treaty allowing surveillance flights over military facilities following the U.S. exit from the treaty. The vote comes after U.S. officials told Moscow last month that President Joe Biden's administration had decided not to reenter the Open Skies Treaty, which had allowed surveillance flights over military facilities before President Donald Trump withdrew from the pact. As a presidential candidate, Biden had criticized Trump's withdrawal as "short-sighted." Moscow has signaled its readi-

ness to reverse the withdrawal procedure and stay in the 1992 treaty if the United States returns to the agreement.

After the Russian upper house voted to leave the treaty, it would now come to Russian President Vladimir Putin for signing. If Putin

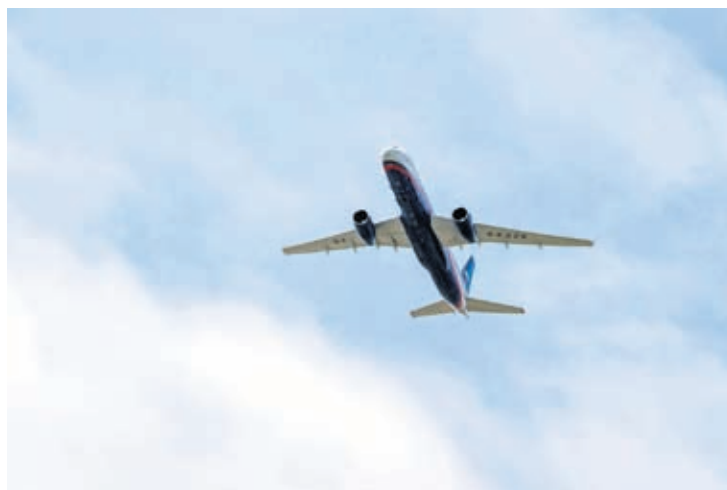
endorses the exit, it would take effect in six months. Putin and Biden are to have a summit in Geneva on June 16. The meeting comes as Russia-U.S. ties have sunk to the lowest levels since the Cold War times after Russia's 2014 annexation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula, the accusations of Moscow's interference in U.S. elections, hacking attacks and other irritants.

The Open Skies Treaty was intended to build trust between Russia and the West by allowing the accord's more than three dozen signatories to conduct reconnaissance flights over each other's territories to collect information about military forces and activi-

ties. More than 1,500 flights have been conducted under the treaty since it took effect in 2002, aimed at fostering transparency and allowing for the monitoring of arms control and other agreements.

Trump pulled out of the pact last year, arguing that Russian violations made it untenable for Washington to remain a party. Washington completed its withdrawal from the treaty in November.

Moscow has deplored the U.S. withdrawal, warning that it will erode global security by making it more difficult for governments to interpret the intentions of other nations, particularly amid heightened Russia-West tensions. □



In this file photo taken on Friday, April 26, 2019, A Russian Air Force Tu-214 flies over Offutt Air Force Base, Friday, April 26, 2019, in Omaha, Neb.

Associated Press

Iran's largest warship catches fire, sinks in Gulf of Oman

By **AMIR VAHDAT** and **JON GAMBRELL**

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — The largest warship in the Iranian navy caught fire and later sank Wednesday in the Gulf of Oman under unclear circumstances, the latest calamity to strike one of the country's vessels in recent years amid tensions with the West.

The blaze began around 2:25 a.m. and firefighters tried to contain it, the Fars news agency reported, but their efforts failed to save the 207-meter (679-foot) Kharg, which was used to resupply other ships in the fleet at sea and conduct training exercises. State media reported 400 sailors and trainee cadets on board fled the vessel, with 33 suffering injuries.

The ship sank near the Iranian port of Jask, some 1,270 kilometers (790 miles) southeast of Tehran on the Gulf of Oman near the Strait of Hormuz — the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf. Satellite photos from Planet Labs Inc. analyzed by The Associated Press showed the Kharg off Jask with no sign of a fire as late as 11 a.m. Tuesday.

Photos circulated on Ira-



This undated photo provided by the Iranian army shows navy's support ship Kharg.

Associated Press

nian social media showed sailors wearing life jackets evacuating the vessel as a fire burned behind them. Fars published video of thick, black smoke rising from the ship early Wednesday morning. Satellites from the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration that track fires from space detected a blaze near Jask that started just before the time of the fire reported by Fars.

Iranian officials offered no cause for the fire aboard the Kharg, though they said an investigation had begun.

Meanwhile, a massive fire broke out Wednesday night at the oil refinery serving Iran's capital, sending thick plumes of black smoke over Tehran. It wasn't immediately clear if there were injuries or what caused the blaze at the Tondgooyan Petrochemical Co., though

temperatures in the capital reached nearly 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit) and hot summer weather in Iran has caused fires in the past.

The fire Wednesday aboard the Kharg warship follows a series of mysterious explosions that began in 2019 targeting commercial ships in the Gulf of Oman. The U.S. Navy accused Iran of targeting the ships with limpet mines, timed explosives

typically attached by divers to a vessel's hull.

Iran denied that, though U.S. Navy footage showed Revolutionary Guard members removing one unexploded limpet mine from a ship. The attacks came amid heightened tensions between the U.S. and Iran after then-President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew America from Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers. Negotiations on saving the accord continue in Vienna.

In April, an Iranian ship called the MV Saviz believed to be a Guard base and anchored for years in the Red Sea off Yemen was targeted in an attack suspected to have been carried out by Israel. It escalated a yearslong shadow war in the Mideast between the two countries, ranging from strikes in Syria, assaults on ships and attacks on Iran's nuclear program.

The Israeli prime minister's office did not respond to a request for comment Wednesday regarding the Kharg. Pentagon press secretary John Kirby said the U.S. was aware of the loss of the ship, but declined to comment further. □

U.S. seeks freedom for 2 American journalists in Myanmar



In this photo released by Government Spokesman Office, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy R. Sherman, left, and Thailand's Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha, right, give the traditional greeting or "wai" at Government House in Bangkok, Thailand, Wednesday, June 2, 2021.

Associated Press

BANGKOK, Thailand (AP) — A U.S. State Department official called on Wednesday for the immediate release

of two American journalists who were arrested by Myanmar's military junta. Deputy Secretary of State

Wendy Sherman said the arrests of Danny Fenster and Nathan Maung were of deep concern, and urged that they be freed and allowed to return home to their families.

"A free and independent media is indispensable to build prosperous, resilient and free societies. The detention of Daniel and Nathan, as well as arrests and use of violence by the Burmese military against other journalists, constitutes an unacceptable attack on the freedom of expression in Burma," Sherman told journalists during a stop in Bangkok, referring to Myanmar by its former name.

Sherman is making her first overseas trip since taking office, with visits to Belgium, Turkey, Indonesia, Cambodia and Thailand.

Fenster, 37, the managing editor of the news and business magazine Frontier Myanmar, was detained at Yangon International Airport on June 24 as he was preparing to board a flight to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, en route to the Detroit area to see his family.

Maung and Myanmar national Hanthar Nyein, co-founders of the Myanmar news website Kamayut Media, were arrested on March 9, according to the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists, citing accounts in Myanmar media. The group said it had reports that Maung, the website's editor-in-chief, and Hanthar, a news producer, were physically mistreated in their first two weeks of detention at an interrogation center in In-

sein township.

Two other foreign journalists have been arrested by the military junta that took power in February after ousting the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi. Freelancers Robert Bociaga of Poland and Yuki Kitazumi of Japan have since been deported.

According to Myanmar's Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, about 90 journalists have been arrested since the army's takeover, with more than half still in detention, and 33 are in hiding.

The association, which keeps a detailed tally of arrests and deaths since the military takeover, says more than 4,400 people are in detention, including 110 who have already been sentenced. □

U.S. urging Central America to tackle poverty, corruption

SAN JOSE, Costa Rica (AP)

— U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken is trying to entice Central American nations to tackle the corruption and poverty that have helped drive a surge of migrants to the U.S.-Mexico border and presented an early challenge for the Biden administration.

In his first visit to Central America since taking office, America's top diplomat has met with foreign ministers and leaders from the region and Mexico. On the two-day trip ending Wednesday, Blinken has avoided publicly criticizing any particular government, focusing instead on Biden administration plans to distribute COVID-19 vaccines and other assistance, such as a proposed \$4 billion aid package.

"We think that's the best way to ensure greater stability and improve the lives of people across the region, which ultimately is in the United States' interest as well," Blinken said in a joint news conference with President Carlos Alvarado of Costa Rica. The approach is a departure from the Trump administration, which reacted to an increase in migrants by expelling asylum-seekers to Mexico or Central America and stepping up efforts to build a wall along the American Southwest border, among other measures.

After a decline at the start of the pandemic, the number of apprehensions at that border began rising under Trump and swelled in the early months of the Biden administration. The Border Patrol had more than 170,000 encounters, including 50,000 people traveling with families, its highest total since March 2001.

It was a major theme of the private talks Blinken had late Tuesday with the foreign ministers.

The U.S. hopes Mexican and Central American officials can do more to impede the trafficking of migrants, especially children. The Biden administration has been expelling single adults who cross the bor-



U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Costa Rica's President Carlos Alvarado elbow bump after a news conference Tuesday, June 1, 2021, in San Jose, Costa Rica.

Associated Press

der and most families but it allows unaccompanied minors to enter the United States and pursue asylum or other legal claims for residency. U.S. authorities encountered more than 17,000 children traveling alone along the border in April, compared with a record 18,960 a month earlier.

There are limits, however, to what Mexico and Central America can do amid the economic devastation of the COVID-19 pandemic. Leaders made it clear they hope for some of the 81 million vaccines that President Joe Biden has said he will distribute around the world. Details of the distribution plan are expected this month.

Alvarado, whose nation has attracted admiration for its stability, relative affluence and environmental protection, made it clear that Costa Rica would accept only vaccines that have no political strings attached.

"We're talking about saving lives, but that doesn't mean in receiving a donation we will compromise our dignity as a nation," he said at the news conference.

The relative success of

Costa Rica was another theme of the two-day visit. Blinken noted the close ties between the countries, pointing out that 40% of the country's export go to the U.S. and that 70% of the foreign direct investment comes from the U.S. Costa Rica is also a major tourist destination and, before the pandemic, hosted more American students than any other country in the hemisphere.

On Wednesday, Blinken was meeting in private with his Mexican counterpart, Marcelo Ebrard, and planned to visit a nongovernmental organization that provides children and families with recreational and educational activities. It's the kind of organization that would get a piece of the \$4 billion in the proposed aid package that the Biden administration does not want to give di-

rectly to government entities in the region.

"It's no accident that we're here, and we're here first," Blinken said. "We have a remarkably strong partnership that is based on a foundation of shared values and shared perspective."

Highlighting that relationship and those values enabled Blinken to contrast the situation with countries such as Honduras, whose president has been linked by American prosecutors to drug trafficking, and Nicaragua, where the authoritarian government of President Daniel Ortega is under U.S. sanctions.

Blinken avoided any direct remarks about El Salvador's president, Nayib Bukele, a popularly elected leader who has an increasingly tense relationship with the U.S. because of his moves to consolidate power and

weaken El Salvador's other democratic institutions.

Still, it was clearly on Blinken's agenda when he said, "We meet at a moment when democracy and human rights are being undermined in many parts of the region." He noted the "erosion of judicial independence" and crackdown on independent media, in an apparent reference to Bukele, and the "quashing of anticorruption efforts," which likely refers to Honduras and elsewhere.

"We understand how fragile democracy is. We've experienced setbacks in our own country in recent years," he said. "But that experience has underscored for us just how important it is to shore up the institutions and the norms that safeguard our democracy."

The issue of corruption is certain to loom over Vice President Kamala Harris' trip to Guatemala and Mexico next week, where she plans to meet with the presidents of both nations to discuss joint efforts to address the root causes of migration. Harris' chief spokesperson emphasized that the vice president's efforts to secure economic investments and humanitarian aid when outlining her plans for the trip.

The goal is "to deepen our strategic partnership and bilateral relationship" with both countries and "advance a comprehensive strategy to tackle the causes of migration," spokesperson Symone Sanders said. "We will also engage community leaders, workers, young innovators and entrepreneurs and others about ways to provide economic security, address the core factors of migration, and to give people the hope for a better life at home." □



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Fundashon Stimami Sterilisami suspends its sterilization campaign for 2021

ORANJESTAD — For years Fundashon Stimami Sterilisami has been serving the community by helping in reducing the number of suffering and abandoned dogs and cats on our island. With help of its contributors, Stimami Sterilisami sterilized approximately 26.397 dogs and cats between 2016 and 2021. All this at a cost of over Awg. 3 million.

However, with a heavy heart, we regret to inform that our funds have been depleted. Our sponsors are unable to make donations this year and Aruba Bank's donation of Awg. 10.000 and Mr. Ewald Biemans, owner/CEO of Bucuti & Tara Beach resort and Presidente of Stimami Sterilisami foundation, personal donation of Awg. 100.000

is not sufficient to continue any longer.

Now more than ever the efforts of this foundation are necessary seeing that there are more and more pets on the streets abandoned and without owners. Sterilization is the most effective and compassionate method to reduce the numbers of stray dogs and cats. Without sterilization a cat is able to give birth to 62 kittens in a year and dogs up to 28 puppies, this will make all the hard work this foundation has been doing throughout the years in vain.

"We tried doing as much as we could this year and we looked everywhere on how to get funds, but unfortunately expense continue

and no funds received," says Biemans.

For that reason, as of June 15th, 2021, Fundashon Stimami Sterilisami will need to suspend its activities until new funds are received from past and future contributors for the national campaign of sterilization of pets. "This decision truly saddens us and we hope to recoup our sponsors soon so that we may continue with our national sterilization efforts," says Biemans.

Fundashon Stimami Sterilisami is a non-profit organization that uses 100% of its donations to offer partial or full subsidy for the sterilization procedure for house pets and strayed pets. Donations are extremely important for this foundation in order to continue its purpose.



For more information go to www.stimamisterilisami.com.

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Travellers' Choice 2020

Medlab Aruba 'fit-2-fly': Covid-19 testing on the island



NOORD — While on vacation, the last thing you need to worry about is what to do or where to go for your COVID-19 testing. Many countries, including the U.S. require for all passengers heading back home to present with a negative test result for PCR or Antigen 72 hours prior to departure.

MEDLAB Aruba is an accredited ISO 15189:2012 OGA-LE 23-08 laboratory with over 30 years of experience on the island. The laboratory complies with the Department of Public Health of Aruba, and the Centers for Disease Con-

trol and Prevention (CDC) requirements for COVID-19 testing. MEDLAB Aruba has been assigned as one of the private laboratories authorized to perform "Fit-2-Fly" testing for departing passengers.

Hassle free scheduling – QR-code

The laboratory has invested on the only fully integrated digital booking platform on the island that allows guests to pre-register for the testing prior to coming to Aruba and have all their information incorporated upon entry to any of the available testing centers.

Guests will receive a confirmation email with QR-code that will be requested upon day of testing to facilitate a faster turn-around time for your results.

Testing options

Offering three method of testing gives you, our island visitors, the possibility to choose which service is at

your convenience. Recommended time to complete test prior to departure is 48 (72) hours. We also request for you to bring your passport to the appointment. Testing Option 1: Walk-In service at our location in Noord Medical Center (NMC), Noord 63 or at Superfood COVID Testing Center. You may also book online at WWW.COVIDA-RUBA.COM and choose location.

Testing Option 2: On-site at participating hotels. Only guests staying on these properties will be allowed to conduct the test. Appointment is also made online at WWW.COVIDA-RUBA.COM.

The participating hotels with testing facilities are Aruba Marriott Resort (Stellaris, Ocean and Surf Club), Holiday Inn, Playa Linda Beach Resort, RIU Antillas, RIU Palace, Eagle Resort, Costa Linda Beach Resort, Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort, Manchebo Beach Resort, Casa del Mar & Aruba Beach Club, Caribbean

Palm Village.

Testing Option 3: Airbnb/ Other hotel location. We come to you for the test together with our vehicular Mobile Health Test Unit. We require a minimum of six people for this service. Request/ Book appointment through WhatsApp number +297 5975548.

Price

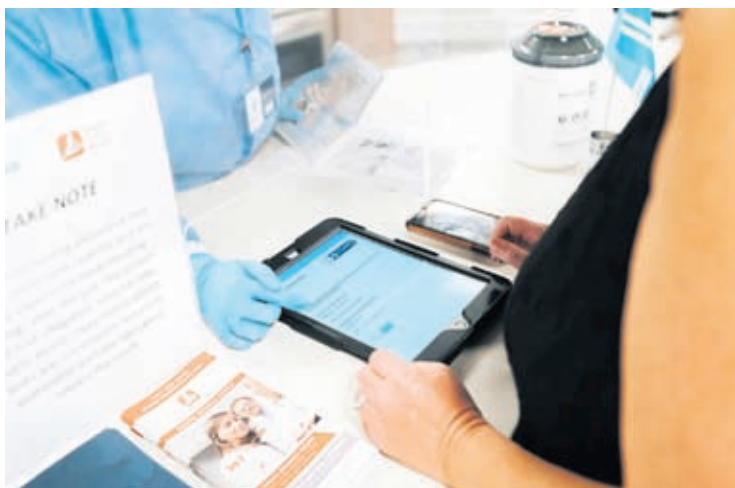
Offering a great rate for the testing. The Antigen test is at \$50 and the PCR at \$100. Payment method is card (preferred), cash (hygiene measures).

The COVID Test is not covered by the Aruba Visitor's Insurance, but you are able to seek reimbursement once back home.

Results

Turn-around time for results is within 24 hours. Result is sent electronically to your email (check spam/ junk folder)

For more information visit www.covidaruba.com, call us at +297 5975548 or email us at covid@lab.aw. □



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Take a seat on the Social Sofa

EAGLE BEACH —Omaira Silva is well-known for her masterpieces. The most popular piece, the precious iguana, can be seen at the Aruba's airport. Now, she is finalizing another piece of art the 'Mosaic Social Sofa' at Eagle Beach.

Back in November of 2020, Silva received a phone call from Felipe Da Silva of the MOTA group in charge of the WVB Watty Vos Boulevard, stating that his company needed to install an artistic cement bench to finalize the Eagle Beach Park. Silva was excited and presented immediately the Mosaic Social Sofa project that she knew off and was personally introduced to while visiting Europe in March 2019. During her visit in Europe she located several Mosaic Social Sofas in several cities and communities. Photos were sent to Da Silva and it was a done deal. She would cover or as she calls it 'upholster' the cement bench in Mosaic Art and the theme would be our local Flora & Fauna. The project would have a duration of 6 weeks. Silva started the project on January 17, 2021 and is now completed.

Silva also had introduced the Mosaic Social Sofa to Aruba Art Fair, Tito Bolivar for the section Ban Mosaik project in July 2019, which she is a member of. Having done two Mosaic Art project murals in San Nicolas for the Aruba Art Fair, in September 2016 the Carnival Nymph alongside renowned Chilean Mosaic Artist Isidora Paz Lopez and Carolina Kawal, an Ceramist from Brazil and the 'Cocolishi' Angel Wings in November 2019 as a solo project for which international Mosaic artist Kim Wozniak and

Laura Rendlen were invited. Silva was assisted also by model Sandra Vega for this project. However, due to Covid-19 all came to a halt. Therefore the excitement to do this project on Eagle Beach is understandable.

About the design Flora & Fauna

- Our Shoko, the Aruban Burrowing Owl, (*Athene cunicularia rubensis*) declared our National Symbol in 2012.
- The orange Trupiaal, is also called the Venezuelan troupial and can be found in this region, Curacao and Bonaire,
- The Ruby Topaz Hummingbird for its bright pearly reddish colors and rounded tails and is bigger than the blue tailed emerald,
- The Caribbean Parakeet for us Prikichi (*Aratinga pertinax arubensis*) has become the National Bird of Aruba,
- Our Bariga Geel 'chibichibi' aka Bananaquit or Suikerdiefje, or referred as the chickadee of the Caribbean.
- The Kododo blauw (*Cnemidophorus arubensis*) Aruban Whiptail Lizard aka 'renhagedis' as they swiftly disappear, just love those bright blue spots.
- Our Iguana, locally better known as nos Yuwana, an adult iguana's color normally is a grayish green, while a young iguana is a bright neon green
- The Monarch Butterfly and the small yellow butterflies that always dart in every garden,
- Flora: The greenery in different shades of green our local flora, Kadushi Largo, the Prickly Pear/barbari fig, glass pebbles and marbles for the sparkle, the



Bushi Cacti, the Aloe Vera giving it different shades of green and blue, Shrubs and Hedges as background and also added the tropical Hibiscus/Cayena Red flower to bring some more color into this project. The dark green evergreen type leaves. The White Periwinkle flowers or Vinca, as they grow wild on our island and for sure in many gardens. She also added a few yellow Wanglo flowers under the iguana located on the front of the bench, to take it a little out of the camouflage.

Every piece of ceramic tile is hand cut with much detail, placed with precision, passion, dedication, patience, hard work grouting, polishing and all with love for the art to bring it all together.

The selection of the local flora & fauna for this social sofa project was done in a playful, colorful whimsical approach as hope to contribute and help to boost awareness of nature on Aruba to ensure that especially our national birds do not disappear from the Aruban landscape. Most of the detailed mosaic art was created in her home studio and installed on

location at the Eagle Beach Park, which attracted many visitors and created many social gatherings. Silva is pleasantly amazed how children interact with the art work, it pleases her immensely.

Just to imagine, parents sitting on a piece of art, stylish bench watching their kids play in the play park, or just when one is on a break from work to sit back and relax or read a book, or just sit in the sun, join a friend for a conversation and suddenly the Mosaic Social Sofa becomes an extension of one's living room.

Silva's dream is to have many Mosaic Social Sofas around the island in communities, bus stops, on a square, schools, mall or downtown created with the members of the community, a great team/friendship building moments.

Her wish is for everyone to preserve our Mosaic Social Sofa, to use extra caution as tiles do break, crack, chip or get damaged, to use TLC, no sharp objects, or use it as a resting place for bicycles, to be socially responsible for this Mosaic Social Sofa to last and be preserved for a long time, just like any equipment in the park. □

The Prime Minister of Aruba met with representatives of Safety House at the office of the Public Prosecution Service

ORANJESTAD — Last week, the Prime Minister of Aruba, Evelyn Wever-Croes, together with the Minister of Justice Andin Bikker, had a meeting with the Public

Prosecution Service to discuss the Aruba Security House.

Safety House Aruba is a collaboration platform between different entities in Aruba in the field of criminal justice and care that meet every two weeks to deal with individual cases. Last week Thursday was a very important day when they presented their annual report for 2020. The Safety House was established 3 years ago as a platform to address cases of extreme social problems such as individuals at risk, repeat offenders, people with mental health problems who need help, as well as victims and also perpetrators of domestic violence.

It is noteworthy to say that many seniors are victims of abuse.

The core partners of the Safety House are:

Compulsory Education, Bureau Sostenevi, KIA, Social Affairs Department, Guardianship Council, Fundacion Guia Mi, Wit Geel Kruis, FMAA, Respaldo, Victim Support Office, KPA, Public Prosecution Service, Probation and Youth Protection Foundation Aruba, Social Psychiatric Service and the FCCA. Thursday's meeting was with representatives from these institutions who presented the annual report of everything that has been done in 2020. A year full of challenges

caused by the pandemic, but in which 112 individual cases of persons in the above categories were addressed. The purpose of the Safety House in particular is to help and prepare problematic children to be successful as they mature.

It is sad to say that the age of the children with an addiction has already dropped to 11 years. Another problem that arises is primary school students selling drugs at school. Mental health problems are also discussed, as well as the long waiting list in mental health care during the pandemic. They also provide assistance to young people who have fallen ill, especially undocumented migrants. □



When it's OK to let your good credit score drop

By BEV O'SHEA of NerdWallet

If you've worked hard to achieve and maintain a good credit score, it can be upsetting to see it drop. But "life happens, and sometimes how you react is going to blow back and affect your credit score," says credit expert John Ulzheimer. People lose jobs, cars break down and pipes leak. Credit may be your safety net.

Painful as it may be, there are times when taking actions that hurt your score are prudent for your overall finances.

WHEN YOU HAVE AN EMERGENCY EXPENSE

If you have a big, unexpected expense that exceeds your emergency savings, using your credit cards to cover it can be a decent option.

You may have some temporary score damage from having a high balance on your card for a while. It's generally best to keep balances below 30% of your credit limit, and of course, paying in full every month is ideal. But the damage from a high balance should fade as new, lower balances are reported to credit bureaus.

Don't beat yourself up for not having saved enough. Emergencies don't necessarily match up with when you've saved enough, nor do they come one at a time. Cary Siegel, the au-



This Aug. 11, 2019 file photo shows credit cards in New Orleans.

thor of "Why Didn't They Teach Me This in School?", strongly recommends developing a budget and building an ample emergency fund so you're protected in the future.

WHEN YOU'RE STRUGGLING TO COVER ESSENTIAL EXPENSES

Sometimes a crisis, such as income loss, makes it impossible to cover living expenses. Then, sacrificing a credit score is the lesser of two evils, Ulzheimer says. If you have to choose between paying your credit card on time and keeping the utilities on, keeping your family safe is more im-

portant.

If possible, try to make the minimum payment on your credit card before it's 30 days overdue. Your credit card issuer won't be happy and you'll probably have to pay a late fee. But creditors can't report you to the credit bureaus until your payment is 30 days past the due date.

If you don't pay in that 30-day window, the creditor can report your account delinquent. That negative mark on your credit report will badly damage your score, and only time will undo the damage. It will stay on your credit re-

port for up to seven years, although the effect fades over those years.

Siegel advises getting in touch with creditors and explaining what happened, when you will be back on your feet and how you plan to repay them. They may be willing to give you more time, and you may be able to prevent damage from a potential late payment or negotiate a lower interest rate, he says. And asking can't hurt.

WHEN MONEY IS ON THE WAY

Siegel, the father of five young adults, cautions against an over-reliance

on credit. But he's willing to make an exception for when income is imminent but bills are already here. A tax refund or payment for freelance work falls into this category.

If you know money is coming, credit can be a bridge until it arrives. Be prepared for a score ding as long as you are running a high credit card balance, then look for a rebound as you get it back down.

WHEN STARTING OR INVESTING IN A BUSINESS

Investing in a business is another time you may choose to use your credit, but keep the risks in mind. Siegel says that there should be a clear, detailed business plan that's much more specific than a great idea.

A good or excellent credit score might mean you qualify for an introductory 0% rate on a credit card. Or, you may have plenty of room on your existing credit cards to temporarily run a higher balance than you do normally.

"That could be a scenario that makes sense as long as you have a plan and the ability to know when it's time to stop this — this isn't working (as) I envisioned it," says Tom Quinn, vice president of FICO Scores, a credit scoring and data company. It can be tempting to go all-in, but don't let a business idea threaten your overall financial health.

Amazon to hold Prime Day over 2 days in June

By JOSEPH PISANI

NEW YORK (AP) — Amazon said Wednesday that it will hold its annual Prime Day over two days in June this year, the earliest it has ever held the sales event. Typically, Amazon holds Prime Day in July. Amazon has said it was holding it earlier due to the Olympics, which starts next month and take people's attention away. Last year, Amazon postponed Prime Day to October because

of the pandemic and used the sales event to kickoff holiday shopping early.

This year, Prime Day will be held from June 21 to June 22 in 20 countries, including the U.S., the United Kingdom, Brazil, Italy and Japan.

Amazon started the sales event in 2015 as its answer to Singles' Day, a shopping holiday in China popularized by Chinese e-commerce company Alibaba. It's a way for Amazon to

get people to sign up for its \$119 a year Prime membership, which gets shoppers faster shipping and access to the deals. Prime Day has become one of Amazon's biggest shopping days.

In past years, Walmart, Best Buy, Target and other retailers have offered their own online discounts during Prime Day, trying to grab the attention of shoppers looking for deals online. □



This April 21, 2020 file photo shows Amazon tractor trailers line up outside the Amazon Fulfillment Center in the Staten Island borough of New York.

Associated Press

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Reach across
- 5 Social group
- 10 Old Italian coin
- 11 Take up residence
- 12 Smoothie berry
- 13 Wed in secret
- 14 Woodshop tool
- 16 Boxer's weakness
- 20 Music buys
- 23 Yale rooster
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- 41 Car part
- 42 Jury members
- 43 Wings

DOWN

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- 8 Draw
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- 15 Shade trees
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- 35 Much of history
- 36 Summit
- 37 Poker card
- 38 Director Spike

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Yesterday's answer

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6-3

A X Y D L B A A X R
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

6-3

CRYPTOQUOTE

V N K G U N D N J A U V W O K C A Y N F D Q

R A A Z G N V N K R S R G S K Z N J S K C

K N G Y S G W S G . T F G O W A O Q N I

S G . — Z O U R W O D D Z V D F W O K

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: A HEALTHY ATTITUDE IS CONTAGIOUS BUT DON'T WAIT TO CATCH IT FROM OTHERS. BE A CARRIER. — TOM STOPPARD



Huawei devices are displayed in a Huawei store in Beijing on Wednesday, June 2, 2021.

Associated Press

Huawei rolls out its own operating system to smartphones

HONG KONG (AP) — Huawei launched its own HarmonyOS mobile operating system on its handsets on Wednesday as it adapts to having lost access to Google mobile services two years ago after the U.S. put the Chinese telecommunications company on a trade blacklist.

The Shenzhen-based company announced that about 100 Huawei smartphone models will use its proprietary HarmonyOS system, and that the operating system will also be available on certain tablets and smart screens in the fourth quarter of the year. The launch of the operating system comes as the company is still cut off from American technologies including Google's services and some computer chips to power its devices after the U.S. put it on an "entity list," saying Huawei might aid China's espionage efforts, an accusation the company vehemently denies.

Huawei's inclusion on the list restricts American companies from doing business with the Chinese telecommunications equipment and smartphone maker. The blacklist has been a critical blow for Huawei, which has relied on essen-

tial technologies from the U.S. "The user experience of HarmonyOS has surpassed the experience of the Android era. We solved issues such as the slowing down and lagging of devices over time in the Android era," said Richard Yu, CEO of Huawei's consumer unit, in an online product launch event Wednesday.

"Our HarmonyOS has stronger functionality and endurance, and it will be the greatest operating system in this internet of things era," he said.

Once the world's largest smartphone maker, Huawei fell out of the top five globally last year, nudged aside by South Korea's Samsung, according to data from market research firm Canalys.

Other Chinese smartphone makers such as Xiaomi, OPPO and Vivo have since overtaken Huawei in terms of global sales. Huawei currently ranks seventh globally and third in China following a 50% drop in smartphone shipments in the first quarter of this year compared to last year.

Last November, Huawei also sold its budget Honor smartphone brand as it sought to cushion the impact of the U.S. sanctions. Huawei's HarmonyOS

smartphone rollout is a workaround for its lack of access to Google services, especially for smartphones that it sells abroad. While handsets that were sold prior to Huawei's blacklisting continue to run Google services, its newer devices will have no access to Google's mobile services or updates.

To solve this problem, Huawei launched its own Huawei Mobile Services (HMS) platform that lets developers launch apps for Huawei devices. In March, Huawei said that over 120,000 apps are now on its app store and using HMS, although it is still missing apps popular overseas such as Instagram, Twitter and Facebook. Owners of Huawei phones who have no access to Google services won't be able to download apps such as Gmail or YouTube. Instead, HMS offers shortcuts to the mobile sites of such services.

Google is blocked in China, so Huawei users in China are unlikely to be affected. But the lack of access to Google services makes Huawei a less attractive choice for overseas users, who are used to watching videos on YouTube or using the Gmail email app, analysts say. □

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A familiar adventure story in 'Edge of the World'

By **LINDSEY BAHR**

If the new adventure film "Edge of the World," about a British explorer and soldier in 1840s Borneo, seems suspiciously like "The Man Who Would Be King" and "Lord Jim," it's for good reason. It was the inspiration for both. Both Rudyard Kipling and Joseph Conrad were moved by the true story of James Brooke, a former soldier in the Bengal Army who would become the Raj of Sarawak at the height of the British Empire. Brooke's family ended up governing there for a century.

Brooke's story may have provided the foundation for a lot, but the other novels and films came first and became classics in the process — not to mention everything they then informed and inspired. It's not that Hollywood hasn't tried to give Brooke his due. Even Errol Flynn was supposed to play him at one point.

On one level, it's impossible for "Edge of the World" not to feel like homage. At the same time, director Michael Haussman (a prolific music video director) and screenwriter and producer Rob Allyn (for whom this has been a passion project) make the smart choice to simply lean into



This image released by Samuel Goldwyn Films shows Dominic Monaghan in a scene from "Edge of the World."

Associated Press

the canon instead of trying to forge a new path. It's not just story beats that feel familiar, but visual cues as well. Terrence Malick's "The New World" may have been the filmmakers' most cited touchstone.

The always intense Jonathan Rhys Meyers stars as Brooke, a wanderer by nature who has never felt at home in Victorian England. Born in India and once a soldier, he's seen enough to know what he's not looking for and thus takes his inheritance and funds wild missions with his pals. He's also decidedly more modern than many of his peers in

terms of how he views colonialism and is fascinated by other cultures, not as conquests for an empire, but on their own terms. Even so, he shares some views with his countrymen about "civilizing" the more "savage" aspects of some of the native people he encounters. Brooke is immediately smitten with Borneo when he arrives on a private expedition with a few countrymen, Colonel Arthur Crookshank (Dominic Monaghan) and Charlie (Otto Farant). There they meet two princes, the cosmopolitan Badruddin (Samo Rafael) and Mahkota (Bront Palarae), who are

friendly but have decidedly different views on governance, punishment and rewards (Mahkota favors beheading). After Brooke helps the locals squash a rebellion, the Sultan of Brunei makes him Rajah of Sarawak and he quickly starts an intense romance with the beautiful Fatima (Atiqah Hasiholan). As the leader, he attempts to meld his ideas of civilization with the customs of the people he's now responsible for. He dreams of a world without piracy, slavery and head-hunting. Many are eager to follow him.

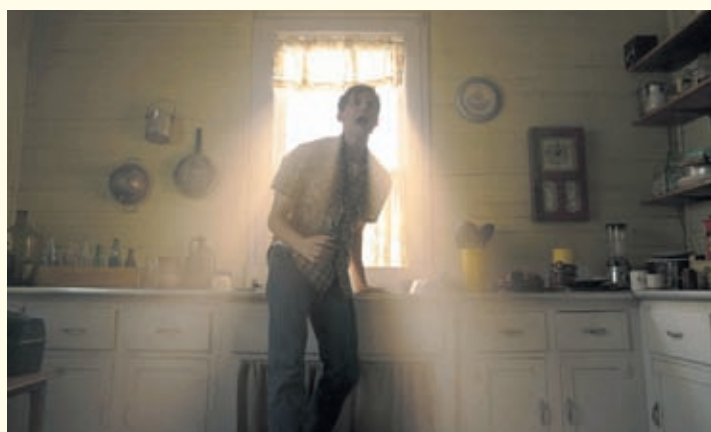
But anyone who has even

the most passing familiarity with "Heart of Darkness," or "Apocalypse Now," will know that the honeymoon is soon to end. The threat of Mahkota still looms and there are even some attempts get the British Navy to lend a steamship to go upriver and conquer the enemy. That also turns into its own battle over sovereignty and imperialism.

Brooke narrates much of this journey through dreamy, poetic voiceovers, which even when successful can be an acquired taste. He's a bit of an inscrutable character, hard to embrace but also not necessarily one you're rooting against. In other words, Meyers is perfectly cast.

This is a film that is striving to be a classic swashbuckler, a lyrical meditation on exploration and identity and a knowingly modern commentary on a deplorable but significant era in world history. Not unlike Brooke's, the ambitions were admirably grand. While it might not knock it out of the park, "Edge of the World" is still a very solid watch if a little slow-going and might also just inspire you to revisit some of the classics its indebted to which is its own small triumph. □

Brother of boy 'possessed' resents retelling in 'Conjuring'



This image released by Warner Bros. Entertainment shows Ruairi O'Connor in a scene from "The Conjuring: The Devil Made Me Do It."

Associated Press

BROOKFIELD, Conn. (AP) — The brother of a boy who some thought was possessed by demons has told the Hartford Courant previously that he resents the retelling of his family's

trauma, which features as the plot in the new film "The Conjuring 3."

Carl Glatzel, 55, left Connecticut because of the painful events that started when his brother, David,

began having hallucinations and delusions as a boy, the newspaper reported Wednesday.

Arne Johnson, the boy-friend and later husband of Deborah Glatzel, Carl and David's sister, alleged that a demon left the boy and entered him during an exorcism and caused him to murder his landlord, Alan Bono, in 1981. Johnson was convicted of manslaughter and served four years in prison.

A defense attorney tried to defend Johnson against the charges, saying the devil had made him do it. The judge did not permit the arguments, which were based on claims by a couple, Ed and Lorraine Warren, who said they

were paranormal investigators. The couple feature as the main characters in the film franchise.

Carl Glatzel has said the Warrens exploited his family for monetary gain. He told The Associated Press in 2007 that his brother had suffered from mental illness as a child but has now recovered.

"It was living hell when we were kids," Glatzel told the AP that year. "It was just a nightmare. I'm not going to go through that again. Neither is my brother."

The case was made into a 1983 NBC television movie, "The Demon Murder Case," and was the subject of a book "The Devil in Connecticut," by Gerald Brittle. Carl Glatzel sued Brittle

and Lorraine Warren when the book was reprinted in 2006, though the case was dismissed. Brittle told the newspaper the book was taken out of print because of the lawsuit.

"I did it because I was fed up with the case, fed up with Carl Glatzel," Brittle said. "It just wasn't worth it to me. It had no bearing on the fact that the book was true."

"The Conjuring 3" opens in theaters on June 4 and will be available on HBO Max for 31 days from theatrical release. The newspaper could not reach Arne Johnson for comment. Deborah Johnson, Ed Warren and Lorraine Warren have died, the newspaper reported. □

AP source: Duke's Krzyzewski to coach last season in 2021-22

By AARON BEARD

Duke Hall of Fame coach Mike Krzyzewski will coach his final season with the Blue Devils in 2021-22, a person familiar with the situation told The Associated Press on Wednesday.

The person said former Duke player and associate head coach Jon Scheyer would then take over as Krzyzewski's successor for the 2022-23 season.

The person spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because the school hasn't commented publicly on the decision. An announcement is expected later Wednesday.

Stadium first reported news of the 74-year-old Krzyzewski's final season with Duke, which he has led to five national championships, most recently in 2015. With 1,170 victories, he is the winningest coach in men's college basketball history, with 1,097 of them coming during his 41 years with the Blue Devils.

Krzyzewski has led the Blue Devils to 12 Final Four appearances and a record 15 Atlantic Conference Tournament championships, while his teams have spent



In this March 28, 2019, file photo, Duke head coach Mike Krzyzewski answers questions during a news conference at the NCAA college basketball tournament in Washington. Duke Hall of Fame coach Mike Krzyzewski will coach his final season with the Blue Devils in 2021-22, a person familiar with the situation said Wednesday, June 2, 2021.

Associated Press

a record 126 weeks ranked at No. 1 in the AP men's college basketball poll.

Hired at Duke in May 1980, "Coach K" won national championships in 1991, 1992, 2001, 2010 and 2015, while setting the men's career coaching victories record in November 2011.

He has tailored his approach to adapt with the times and his personnel. He won that 2010 title with a senior-laden roster, then claimed the 2015 one after pivoting to more "one-and-done" talent that headed to the NBA after a lone college season playing

in Duke's famously hostile Cameron Indoor Stadium. And his image became synonymous both with the elite private university in Durham, North Carolina, and the sport as a whole. Along the way, he also took over the U.S. men's national team — with NBA All-

Star rosters featuring names such as the late Kobe Bryant and LeBron James — and led it to Olympic gold in Beijing in 2008, London in 2012 and Rio de Janeiro in 2016.

Duke missed the NCAA Tournament this past season for the first time since 1995, but the Blue Devils welcome one of the nation's top recruiting classes for the coming season.

Scheyer played for Krzyzewski from 2006-10, with his last season resulting in his mentor's fourth NCAA title. Scheyer joined the Duke staff for the 2013-14 season and rose to his current role following the 2017-18 season.

Scheyer served as interim coach last year for Duke when Krzyzewski was sidelined for a January win against Boston College due to COVID-19 protocols. Scheyer has never been a college head coach.

The news comes almost two months to the day that another Hall of Famer in the state — North Carolina's Roy Williams — announced his retirement after 33 seasons as a head coach with Kansas and the Tar Heels. □

Women's soccer saw significant disruption from pandemic

By ANNE M. PETERSON

The coronavirus outbreak brought significant disruption to women's soccer around the world, with some players going without competition for as many as 250 days, according to a FIFPRO report.

Three-quarters of women's leagues stopped play because of the pandemic. And national teams were also impacted, with players experiencing a 56% drop in minutes.

The lack of playing time was exacerbated by a women's competition calendar that is more fragmented than the men's calendar.

FIFPRO, the international players' union, released the findings Wednesday in a report on player workload

and impact during the coronavirus outbreak. The data was culled from its new Player Workload Management platform.

"After 2019, there was this boom of popularity and interest in the sport. And then it got really chopped at the knees because all of a sudden there was no sport, no significant women's football on TV to really maintain that momentum," said Sarah Gregorius, FIFPRO's director of global policy and strategic relations for women's soccer.

"Obviously that has a very direct and real impact on the players but it also has an impact on an industry that's still trying to emerge, still trying to grow, still trying to develop. And obviously you need to have

the sport visible in order for that growth to happen and that momentum to stay in place."

The report detailed the layoffs for several high-profile international players. Lyon midfielder Dzsenifer Marozsán went 165 days between matches, while United States goalkeeper Alyssa Naeher, who plays for the Chicago Red Stars, was idle for 113 days.

Crystal Dunn made only eight appearances for the U.S. national team and the North Carolina Courage May 1, 2020, to Jan. 31. Her minutes dropped 67% from July 2019 to May 2020.

"It is hard at this point to say exactly what the long-term impact of that will be but I think if you're a top-level competitor and



Wolfsburg's players celebrate during the award ceremony after their victory against Frankfurt, during their German Women's DFB Cup Final match, in Cologne, Germany, Sunday May, 30, 2021.

Associated Press

you go that long without competition, it is going to have an effect on you," Gregorius said. "And also we know that during that time it wasn't even just the lack of games, it was the lack of the ability to train, or this very fragmented approach to training, whether you had to do it alone or within your apartment in small groups."

Inactivity and poor training is of concern because it can increase the chance of injury when play is resumed. And, in some cases, competitions returned on condensed schedules, increasing the risk.

The analysis in FIFPRO's report is based on appearances and workload of 85 selected female players from its PWM platform. □

Medina Spirit drug test confirmed; Derby win in jeopardy



John Velazquez riding Medina Spirit crosses the finish line to win the 147th running of the Kentucky Derby at Churchill Downs in Louisville, Ky., in this Saturday, May 1, 2021, file photo.

By **GARY B. GRAVES** and **STEPHEN WHYNO**
AP Sports Writers
LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) —

Bob Baffert's lawyer said Wednesday that a split-

sample test of Kentucky Derby winner Medina Spirit came back positive for the presence of the steroid betamethasone, which could lead to the horse's disquali-

fication and discipline for the Hall of Fame trainer.

Attorney Craig Robertson said the second test showed 25 picograms of the steroid, after 21 picograms were found initially. Even a trace amount of betamethasone — a picogram is a trillionth of one gram — is prohibited on race day in Kentucky, Maryland and New York, which are home to the sport's Triple Crown races, and considered a violation. Robertson said additional testing is being conducted to try to trace the source of the drug to an ointment to treat a skin infection and not an injection. He and attorney Clark Brewster, who represents Medina Spirit owner Amr Zedan, said they expect tests to show

the ointment is responsible and not injections into one of the horse's joints.

"I think that will shed the light most prominently on the issue here for us," Brewster told The Associated Press by phone. "The whole basis for listing betamethasone is because it's injected into a joint and they want you not to inject the joints too close to the race, so the whole substantive basis is out the window if it's a salve, and it can be proven scientifically and empirically to be the salve."

Rules in Kentucky do not differentiate punishment based on the source of the substance, which can be given to horses to help their joints and Baffert believes came from the dermatitis ointment. Churchill Downs

said Medina Spirit would be disqualified if the split sample came back positive for betamethasone.

A spokeswoman for the Kentucky Horse Racing Commission declined to comment, citing the ongoing investigation. Sherelle Roberts-Pierre said the commission "values fairness and transparency and will provide information to the media and public at the close of an investigation."

A Churchill Downs spokesman said the track is awaiting official notification of the split-sample test results from the Kentucky Horse Racing Commission.

"At the end of the day, we anticipate this case to be about the treatment of Medina Spirit's skin rash with Otomax," Robertson said. "We will have nothing further to say until the additional testing is complete." Brewster said he hoped the additional tests would come back in a week to 10 days.

If Medina Spirit is disqualified, Mandaloun would be elevated as the winner of the May 1 Kentucky Derby. "I can't control the outcome of that, so it's something I give very, very little thought to," said Brad Cox, who trains Mandaloun and would be the first trainer from Louisville to win the race.

Baffert is currently suspended by the New York Racing Association and not allowed to enter any horses in this weekend's Belmont Stakes pending the Derby investigation. He could face additional sanctions following his fifth medication violation in the past 13 months.

Maryland officials allowed Medina Spirit and Baffert-trained Concert Tour to compete in the May 15 Preakness at Pimlico and filly Beautiful Gift in the Black-Eyed Susan the previous day after all three passed three rounds of prerace testing. Medina Spirit finished third and Concert Tour ninth in the second jewel of racing's Triple Crown, which went off without Baffert in attendance. □

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